MISSION

The National Pancreas Foundation provides hope for those suffering from pancreatitis and pancreatic cancer through funding cutting edge research, advocating for improved therapies, and providing continuous support and education for patients, caregivers, and health care professionals. The National Pancreas Foundation has been providing hope for those courageously fighting pancreatitis and pancreatic cancer in the United States for 25 years.

TYPES OF PANCREAS DISEASE

Acute Pancreatitis
Acute pancreatitis is a serious condition where the pancreas becomes inflamed over a short period of time. The most common cause of acute pancreatitis is stones in the gallbladder. Several other causes of acute pancreatitis include: ingested medicines; high triglyceride levels in the blood; high calcium levels in the blood; tumors of the pancreas, and heavy alcohol consumption.

Chronic Pancreatitis
Chronic pancreatitis is a long-standing inflammation of the pancreas that alters the organ’s normal structure and functions. Causes of chronic pancreatitis include: autoimmune conditions; genetic mutations such as cystic fibrosis; blocked pancreatic duct or common bile duct; familial pancreatitis; and heavy alcohol and tobacco use.

Pancreatic Cancer
Pancreatic cancer is a disease in which malignant (cancerous) cells form in the tissues of the pancreas. Early stage of pancreatic cancer may be asymptomatic. Symptoms will show up only when the disease progresses and include: digestive problems, including abnormal stools, nausea or vomiting; pain in the upper abdomen and back; loss of appetite; sudden weight loss; jaundice; and very high sugar levels in diabetic patients.

Familial Chylomicronemia Syndrome
Familial chylomicronemia syndrome (FCS) is a rare, inherited disease that prevents the body from breaking down fats. Eating even a little fat can make someone with FCS ill, and the condition causes chronic symptoms and can lead to pancreatitis. FCS is a genetic disorder passed down from parents. The enzyme that breaks down triglycerides is absent or does not work, causing triglycerides in the blood to build up.

Pediatric Pancreatitis
Pediatric pancreatitis can be difficult to diagnose as many in the medical community are unfamiliar with this pediatric disease. Most cases of pediatric pancreatitis are hereditary pancreatitis due to one of several gene mutations. Initial screening for pediatric pancreatitis is a blood test that looks for elevated presence of enzymes when children or adolescents have acute or recurrent abdominal pain.

Contact Us
The National Pancreas Foundation
3 Bethesda Metro Center, Suite 700
Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: (866) 726-2737
Email: info@pancreasfoundation.org
www.pancreasfoundation.org

"Experiencing the devastating impact that pancreas disease had on loved ones motivated us to join forces to start NPF. For more than 20 years we have had the privilege of reaching our unified goal - the improvement in the diagnosis, treatment and quality of life for those suffering from pancreatitis and/or pancreatic cancer."

Patter Birsic & Jane Holt
NPF Co-Founders

"When I found out I had chronic pancreatitis, I searched for quality sources of information and research. NPF has become a source of support, research, insight and information. They are a light on the highway of this disease for patients and caregivers."

Adriana Llamas Cowdin

“Providing hope for those courageously fighting pancreatitis and pancreatic cancer in the United States for 25 years.”

www.pancreasfoundation.org
ABOUT AND HISTORY

Our History
The National Pancreas Foundation (NPF) was founded in 1997. Since that time NPF has made it our mission to significantly influence the physician and pancreatic research community and provide much needed education and resources to patients and their families who are afflicted by pancreatic disease. NPF advocates for increased research funding for diseases of the pancreas from both the public and private sectors. NPF works with government, for-profit and non-profit organizations as well as the biopharmaceutical industry to improve the level of awareness, interest and investment in research for pancreas disease.

Prevalence of Pancreatic Disease
Acute and chronic pancreatitis affects over 500,000 adults and children each year in the United States. Pancreatic Cancer attacks over 50,000 persons in the United States every year and is one of the few solid tumor types which is increasing in incidence. It currently causes more deaths than breast cancer and is forecast to become the second leading cause of cancer deaths in this country by 2030.

About The Pancreas
The pancreas is an organ in the upper abdomen. It is approximately 6 inches long and is located behind the stomach. The pancreas has 2 main functions:

- It makes enzymes, which help digest proteins, fats, and carbohydrates before they can be absorbed in the intestine.
- It makes hormones (chemicals made from glands), the most important of which is insulin, which controls how the body uses and stores sugar (glucose), its main source of energy.

PATIENT PROGRAMS

National Patient Registry
The EMPOWER Portal is a national registry initiative driven by patient-reported data to track the health and treatments of people with pancreatic diseases. Unlike other patient registries, the EMPOWER Portal is equipped with tools to empower patients to become more proactive in their health to improve their quality of life.

Animated Pancreas Patient
This resource is intended for patients with diseases of the pancreas. You will find expert advice to help you discuss key issues with your health care provider and make important decisions related to management and treatment. Easy-to-understand animations with audio narration, expert video explanations, patient interviews, slide shows, and downloadable information on major pancreatic disease topics are available.

NPF Centers
The National Pancreas Foundation Centers are located at premier healthcare facilities throughout the United States. High levels of focus are placed on multidisciplinary treatment of pancreas disease, treating the “whole patient” with a focus on the best possible outcomes and an improved quality of overall life.

Patient Support Community
The Inspire Pancreatitis Support Community offers a place where pancreatitis patients and caregivers can ask questions, give support, and share important information with one another.

State Chapters
NPF is a nationally recognized organization with a growing network of state chapters. Local volunteers fuel awareness for pancreatic diseases such as chronic and acute pancreatitis and pancreatic cancer. Volunteers understand the specific needs of their local communities and they promote and expand patient, public, and professional education. The Chapters are established to network with physicians, patients, family members and caregivers to provide support and encouragement. Chapters also host local fundraising, educational and patients’ peer support events.

PHYSICIAN & MEDICAL PROGRAMS

Research Grants
Each year NPF awards grants for promising research projects in the field of pancreas disease. NPF is the only organization that supports research in all areas of pancreas disease: pancreatic cancer; acute pancreatitis; chronic pancreatitis; and pediatric pancreatitis. Over $4 million in grants have been provided for pancreas disease research.

Fellows Symposium
NPF hosts an annual Fellows Symposium. By engaging young physicians and researchers and teaming them up with world-class mentors, we encourage them to make a life-long commitment to finding new treatments and eventually a cure for all forms of pancreas disease.

Medical Education
Medical provider educational information and opportunities including on-line educational opportunities, clinical conferences, lectures and discussion groups and investigative research meetings to further the multidisciplinary understanding and treatment of pancreatic diseases.

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